

DD/S 63-5343

FILE Bldg 4/43-1
(Highway)

20 DEC 1963

Mr. Roger C. Horne, Acting Regional Director
National Capital Region
National Park Service
1100 Ohio Drive, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20242

Dear Mr. Horne:

Thank you very much for your most thoughtful letter of 29 November explaining the position of the National Park Service with regard to safety measures along the George Washington Memorial Parkway.

Your most careful consideration of, and your cooperation in, this matter are greatly appreciated. If at any time the Agency can be of any assistance to the Park Service in this or other areas of mutual interest, I hope that you will let me know.

Sincerely,

Signed

L. K. White
Deputy Director
(Support)

SA-DD/S:RHW:fmf(12 Dec 63)

DD/S:LKW:fp

Distribution:

O&I - Addressee

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DD/S 63-5213

Executive Registry
63-4024

5 DEC 1963

STATINT

MEMORANDUM FOR: Mr. Kirkpatrick

Kirk:

With regard to actions taken as a result of your memorandum of 1 October regarding speeding on the Parkway, Agency chauffeurs have been cautioned regarding excessive speed, the Arnold Lines have pledged their cooperation and the Park Service has replied to our letter of 17 October in which we made several suggestions to discourage speeding and to reduce traffic hazards on the Parkway. The reply is attached since much of it is devoted to Park Service rationale for not accepting our suggestion that speed limits be reduced under hazardous driving conditions.

Posting of signs at our exits when hazardous conditions exist and increased patrolling by the Park Police should have a salutary effect on our drivers - especially in light of the plans to levy fines for infractions on our own grounds.

I am also attaching a flyer, in which you concurred, warning drivers about excessive speed on driveways and nearby roads. We will place this flyer on all cars on the grounds on a given day. This will be the third written warning since last May.

L. K. White

STATINT

2 Atts:

Att 1: Ltr dtd 29 Nov 63 to DD/S fm

Robert C. Horne

Att 2: Draft Flyer



UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION
1100 OHIO DRIVE, S. W.
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20242

NOV 29 1963

IN REPLY REFER TO:

D30-NCR(RU)

Mr. L. K. White
Deputy Director (Support)
Central Intelligence Agency
Washington, D. C. 20505

Dear Mr. White:

Your letter of October 17 to Director Wirth of the National Park Service, containing several suggestions for alleviating unsafe conditions or practices on the George Washington Memorial Parkway, has been referred to this Office for reply.

In view of the intense interest in which public safety is held by the National Park Service, your letter was brought to the attention of the appropriate members of the staff of the National Capital Region with a request that a careful study be made of each suggestion contained therein.

It is definitely believed that the posting of signs at your gates, warning your employees of possible snow or icy conditions on the Parkway and cautioning them to adjust their driving speeds to existing conditions, would have a very beneficial effect.

For this Office, however, to arbitrarily reduce the existing speed limit on the Parkway to 35 miles per hour during the winter months would, it is felt, impose unjustifiable restrictions on the using public and still fail to achieve the desired results. This conclusion is based on the fact that during the greater portion of the winter the roadway is free from either snow or ice, and during other short periods of time conditions may be such that a reduced speed of even 35 miles per hour may be too great for those conditions.

It is also felt that for this Office to attempt to establish fluctuating speed limits of 35 and 50 miles per hour on the Parkway, depending on road conditions during the winter months, would be highly impracticable. It is believed that this procedure would not only impose a responsibility on personnel of this Office, which should be borne by the motorists, but it could also result in tort actions against the Government for alleged error in judgment on the part of the employee or employees assigned the responsibility of determining the safe driving speed for all sections of the Parkway. The proper exercising of this judgment would be complicated

by the fact that, as stated above, a speed of 35 miles per hour may exceed the safe operating speed on the Parkway for short periods of time. In addition, during adverse driving conditions, seldom would a uniform reduced safe driving speed be applicable to all sections of the Parkway at the same time. Consideration must also be given to the fact that, as you are well aware, the safe driving speed upon a roadway varies not only with the condition of the roadway surface but with traffic conditions, equipment on the individual vehicles such as tire chains, snow tires, etc., and many other factors.

After due consideration of your suggestion that reduced speed limits be posted on the Parkway during the winter months or during adverse driving conditions, it is our feeling that, while we shall continue to make every effort to maintain the Parkway to the best of our ability, we cannot, nor should we, attempt to assume those responsibilities which rightfully belong to the motorists using the facility. This conclusion is supported in both the Motor Vehicle Laws for the State of Virginia and the traffic regulations within areas administered by this Service, as published in Title 36 of the Code of Federal Regulations.

Paragraph (h), section 46.1-190, article 3, of the Motor Vehicle Laws of Virginia provides that:

A person shall be guilty of reckless driving who shall:

(h) Exceed a reasonable speed under the circumstances and traffic conditions existing at the time regardless of any posted speed limit;

The traffic regulation referred to above, which is published in section 3.32(a), part 3, chapter 1, Title 36 CFR, provides that:

Sec. 3.32 Reckless driving; prohibition operations.

Persons operating motor vehicles within areas covered by this part shall drive in a safe manner. The following are prohibited:

(a) Driving carelessly and heedlessly in willful or wanton disregard of the rights or safety of others, or without due caution and circumspection and at a speed or in a manner so as to endanger or be likely to endanger any person or property.

It is believed that adherence to the above-quoted traffic regulations by the motorist on the Parkway will achieve the desired results.

Your expression of concern regarding the hazards created by motor vehicle operators who habitually disregard posted speed limits (or safe driving speeds under adverse driving conditions) is definitely shared by me. Your

suggestion that the Parkway receive additional police patrolling during the morning and evening rush periods has been referred to the U. S. Park Police. In this regard, we have been assured that special attention will be given to patrolling and the use of radar equipment.

The mowing of grass areas and performance of other maintenance operations along the George Washington Memorial Parkway, and other parkways under the jurisdiction of this Region, has always presented very serious safety problems to this organization. If it were possible, as you suggest, that this work be performed during the middle of the day or between rush traffic periods, our problems would be lessened to a great extent.


It must be pointed out, however, that, including the George Washington Memorial Parkway, this Region has the responsibility of maintaining approximately 79 miles of parkway road surface, most of which is of divided highway design and therefore equivalent to double the mileage. In addition to the parkway road surfaces, we have approximately 78 miles of other primary road and street surfaces to maintain.

In addition to the road maintenance operations, we have approximately 2,065 acres of grass areas along the parkways that require mowing. Grass areas to be mowed, in addition to the parkways, consist of approximately 2,160 acres.

While we could not possibly perform the required work in the above-mentioned areas if we confined our activities to between the morning and evening rush traffic periods, we do have some of the crews reporting to work at 6:30 and 7 a.m. This procedure reduces the amount of equipment using the roadways during the peak morning rush traffic period and allows the employees to complete their day's work prior to the evening rush period.

While, for reasons as set forth above, we are unable to comply with all of the suggestions contained in your letter, please be assured that your interest in the safety of your employees and the general public is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely yours,


Acting Regional Director

*Bldg & Gr 3-1
(Highways)*

17 OCT 1963

Mr. Conrad L. Wirth
Director
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D. C. 20240

Dear Connie:

With the onset of the fall season I am reminded of a telephone conversation I had with Mr. Jett last January concerning the desirability of reducing the speed limit on the George Washington Memorial Parkway to 35 miles per hour in hazardous weather when driving may be dangerous because of snow or ice. I mentioned to Mr. Jett at that time that we would be glad to post signs at our gates warning drivers of the reduced speed limit if you should decide that such action is feasible. If you have plans to impose special controls during hazardous weather, I would appreciate your advising me in order that we may be suitably prepared before the bad weather begins.

In this general connection, I am increasingly concerned with safety conditions along the Parkway when the weather is clear and dry. It has been my impression that traffic on the Parkway has been increasing steadily, perhaps as a result of continuing progress toward completion of the circumferential highway and the opening of additional sections to traffic. As the volume of traffic grows it becomes relatively more important that the posted speed limits be scrupulously observed, and I wonder if it might not be worthwhile for the Park Police to increase their traffic patrols during the rush hours as a protective measure against the hazards of those few drivers who seem habitually to disregard the speed limits. In addition, it occurs to me that safety during the rush hours would be improved if it were possible to arrange for the mowing and other maintenance operations along the Parkway to be scheduled insofar as possible during the middle part of the day.

We have, from time to time, issued reminders to our employees encouraging them to be observant of speed limits and the normal rules of safe and careful driving. If you have suggestions as to other actions we might take, or if there is any way in which we can cooperate with the Park Service to protect the safety of drivers along the Parkway, I would appreciate receiving your suggestions.

Sincerely,

Signed

L. K. White
Deputy Director

17 OCT 1963

Mr. S. A. DeStefano
President, Arnold Lines
Washington, Virginia & Maryland Coach Co., Inc.
Box 229
Arlington, Virginia

Dear Mr. DeStefano:

During recent weeks there have been several accidents along the George Washington Memorial Parkway between our headquarters building and the Key Bridge access road. To the best of my knowledge, all of these have involved private passenger vehicles and none of your buses have been affected. I am increasingly concerned, however, by the growth in the traffic volume along the Parkway and by the failure of a few drivers to be properly observant of the speed limit, creating safety hazards for your drivers as well as the increasing volume of automobile traffic.

While I am not aware of any specific instances in which your bus drivers have exceeded the speed limit, it occurs to me that you might consider it appropriate, in the interest of public safety, to caution them against speeding and to be especially careful during the rush hours when the volume of traffic and the number of reckless drivers are at their peak.

Sincerely,

Signed
L. K. White
Deputy Director
(Support)

SA-DD/S:RHW:fmf (15 Oct 63)

Distribution:

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17 OCT 1963

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Logistics

SUBJECT : Safe Driving

As you know, there have been a number of automobile accidents along the George Washington Memorial Parkway during recent weeks, and the Director's concern with traffic safety has been voiced at several Senior Staff Meetings. I am aware that our chauffeurs have some of the finest safety records in the Washington area, but I believe a word of caution against becoming careless is appropriate. The traffic along the Parkway, particularly during the rush hour, seems to be growing steadily and it becomes increasingly important for every driver to be scrupulously attentive to the posted speed limit as well as all of the normal rules of safe driving.

Signed

L. K. White
Deputy Director
(Support)

SA-DD/S:RHW:fmf (15 Oct 63)

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Executive Registry
63-7526

DD/S 63-4165

1 October 1963

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director/Support

SUBJECT : Speed Limit on the Parkway

1. As you would note from my comments at the staff meeting on Tuesday, the 24th, I am very seriously concerned about trying to cut down our personnel losses and injuries due to automobile accidents. You will remember that Mr. McCone said we ought to have the Park Police start setting up radar traps. Before doing this I think we should issue a warning to the Senior Staff at its meeting on 7 October, then perhaps two weeks later turn loose the Park Police who, quite frankly I think, lean over backwards not to bother us.
2. You will recall that last winter I made the suggestion that on days of hazardous driving--freezing rain, snow, ice or fog--the Park Police should have a device of lowering the speed limit to, say, 35 m. p. h. This would not be difficult to do inasmuch as they already have removable signs which they put up calling attention to icy conditions on the pavement. It would only take about a dozen signs indicating that speed had been lowered to 35 m. p. h. because of hazardous driving to be placed at the entrances at the Cabin John Bridge, at Route 123, at Spout Run and in the Key Bridge-Memorial Bridge areas. To these I would add signs to be placed at the two exits from the building grounds simply advising that the Park Police had lowered the speed limit to 35 m. p. h. Would you again contact them and see if they are willing to do this. If not, I will plan to approach Secretary Udall or Under Secretary Carr.
3. Although I have not seen it myself, I am told that some of our people are not too cautious in entering and leaving the parking lots and in driving on Agency grounds. This I consider to be both stupid and reprehensible, and perhaps it would justify another Agency-wide memorandum on the general subject of driving.
4. Finally, I take a very dim view of the speed of the commercial busses on the Parkway. I not only have been passed by them when they have been going 60 or better, but have heard from passengers about their

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disregard for the speed limit. I think a telephone call to the bus company that we want to get our people here in one piece would be useful.

5. As one afterthought, I do not believe it would do any harm to caution all of our drivers.

STATINT



Lyman B. Kirkpatrick
Executive Director

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DRAFT:VRT:maq (4 Dec 63)

AUTOMOBILE ACCIDENTS

Two Employee Bulletins have been issued in recent months urging automobile drivers to observe speed limits and to practice courteous and attentive driving inside the building grounds and on the nearby public roads. These Bulletins received a favorable response by most employees. We appreciate this response and hope that you will bear with us in yet another plea for cooperation. Some of the drivers we are trying to reach may not be our employees and therefore may not have seen the Employee Bulletins.

The maximum speed limit within the building grounds is 20 miles per hour. We ask not only that all drivers observe this maximum speed but that they also extend courtesy to other drivers and to pedestrians at all times.

The accident rate on nearby roads continues to be a cause of concern for the safety of our employees. Some accidents undoubtedly result from speeding. Speed limits along nearby public roads are amply posted. Many of the drivers on these roads are in no way associated with our organization. We understand that speeding along these roads is a matter of current interest, and planned action by police authorities, and that the action may include greater use of radar. It is our hope that employees and associates will lead the way in avoiding accidents, injuries, and in setting the example for safe and courteous driving. Most of you have done this, for which we are grateful.

SAFETY OFFICER